

No More Red Dots Campaign Press Conference
Councilman David James Remarks
June 11, 2012

First, I would like to thank all of you for coming today to this important announcement as we prepare to initiate the No More Red Dots Campaign in the California and Shawnee neighborhoods of West Louisville.

Our community has faced a lot of adversity over the past 30 days. Violence in our neighborhoods is on the rise and, with summer now here, we are searching harder than ever for answers to the difficult questions that face our community.

I appreciate the Mayor's prompt call for action and I'm proud to serve with many other leaders in our community on the Violence Prevention Work Group. Over the coming months, this group will work to better understand the roots of this violence and I'm optimistic about its potential to develop lasting change. But I also know that many people in this community cannot wait any longer – we must reach out to them now and offer new opportunities in the midst of this crisis. And that is what the “No More Red Dots” Campaign is all about.

In law enforcement, we use crime maps to help understand the level of violence on the streets with red dots to represent shootings. It goes without saying that the number of red dots we're seeing on these maps, most of which are concentrated in West Louisville, is highly alarming. I believe our police officers are a vital resource in this struggle, but I also know that we cannot simply arrest ourselves out of this cycle of violence. Awareness must be built by engaging our residents across generational boundaries and throughout our places of worship, local schools, and small businesses. The goal of the No More Red Dots Campaign is to start reducing the number of red dots by providing our most vulnerable youth with the skills to make positive decisions.

Through a partnership with Peace Education and The Life Institute, we have designed a sensible, neighborhood-based plan that brings conflict resolution skills to those who need it most – the ones who live with violence in their lives day in and day out. Four separate programs will engage high school and middle school students, young adults, and neighborhood leaders. Additionally, the creation of street-captains in California and Shawnee will help us collect the intelligence necessary to stop violence before it escalates.

I want to thank members of the Peace Education team including Eileen Blanton and Janeene Shakir (SHAKEER) for their leadership on this initiative. Additionally, Dr. Eddie Woods of Life Institute has been a phenomenal resource in providing us with a street-smart view of how we can be most successful in reaching our youth. To truly make a difference in our neighborhoods and decrease crime we must personally connect with those are closest to the acts of violence. This plan gets us, the elected officials, out of the way and allows resources to go where to those who need them most – the residents of the California and Shawnee neighborhoods.